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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EB/IFD/OIA, EUR/ERA, AND EUR/AGS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN EU PRESIDENCY, FIRST HALF OF 2006 -  
FIRST OUTLINE OF AGENDA

1. (SBU) This message provides an informal, first outline of the GoA's planned work program and a calendar of events for Austria's EU Presidency in the first half of 2006. We developed this information from public sources and personal contacts. This outline reflects a preliminary phase of planning. We will update it as more information becomes available.

2. (SBU) Begin outline:

#### International issues

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-- EU Summit with the U.S. in Austria;  
-- EU Summit with Russia in Moscow;  
-- EU Summit with Canada, most likely in Canada;  
-- EU Summit with Latin America in Austria;  
-- EU - Balkans Summit, which will deal with the status of Kosovo, the Republic Srpska, and Montenegro, but only if there is a reasonable chance of success;  
-- Preparations for the spring IMF and World Bank meetings; and  
-- Preparations for the 6th ASEM (Asia-European Meeting) Summit in Finland in the second half of 2006.

#### EU Enlargement

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-- Final preparations for the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007; and  
-- Accession negotiations with Turkey, possibly Croatia and also Macedonia.

#### EU Budget

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-- Finalization of the EU's financial framework (EU Budget) for 2007-2013; and  
-- The related issues of financing for the EU's structural fund, the 7th framework program for research, and trans-European networks (TEN).

#### Research

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-- 7th Framework Program for Research and Development for 2006-2010;  
-- Security research; and  
-- The European Space Program.

#### EU Constitution

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-- The GoA expects it may have to deal with a possible no-vote from at least one member state, such as the U.K., in 2006.

#### Trade and Customs

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-- Work on a new simplified customs codex;  
-- Reform of the EU's preferential arrangements; and  
-- Implementation of decisions from the December 2005 WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

Still unclear, but also on the GoA's radar screen are:

-- A Gulf Cooperation Council for the possible ratification of a free trade association;  
-- Mediterranean region (Euromed) negotiations with Syria;  
-- The potential inclusion of Libya in the Barcelona process;  
-- A free trade agreement with the Andean Community of Nations and Central America; and  
-- Some as yet unclear activity focused on South Eastern Europe.

#### ECOFIN

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-- Decision on the participation of new members in stage three of the Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM II) as a final step before introducing the Euro;  
-- Stability and Convergence Programs;  
-- Economic policy guidelines 2006-2008; and  
-- Review of employment policy guidelines.

#### Other issues

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- Possible spring summit to review progress of the relaunched Lisbon agenda;
- Work on the EU's environmental sustainability strategy (climate protection);
- A new consumer protection strategy for 2007;
- A new Youth Program for 2007;
- A successor program to "Culture 2000;" and
- Mediaplus - media training.

13. (SBU) Below is a calendar of events for January-June 2006, as far as it is available now:

#### January 2006

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|---------|---|
| 6       | Meeting of the GoA with the European Commission                               |
| 12 - 14 | Justice and Home Affairs Informal Council in Vienna                           |
| 19 - 21 | Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Affairs (possibly in Villach) |
| 26 - 28 | Ministerial Conference on European Identity in Salzburg                       |

#### February 2006

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|---------|---|
| 10 - 11 | Gymnich Informal EU Foreign Ministerial in Salzburg |
|---------|---|

#### March 2006

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|--------------|--|
| 2 - 3        | Transportation Ministers Conference in Bregenz               |
| 7 - 8        | Defense Ministers Conference in Innsbruck                    |
| 16 - 17      | Education Ministers Conference                               |
| 20 - 22      | European Tourism Conference                                  |
| 23 - 24      | European Council Meeting                                     |
| 30 - April 4 | Health Ministers and Youth Ministers Conference in Bad Ischl |

#### April 2006

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|---------|--|
| 6 - 7   | Informal Council of Economics and Finance Ministers (ECOFIN) |
| 8 - 9   | ASEM (Asia-European Meeting) Finance Ministers Meeting       |
| 20 - 22 | Informal Ministerial Conference on Competitiveness in Graz   |

#### May 2006

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|---------|--|
| 11 - 3  | Latin America Summit                             |
| 19 - 21 | Informal Environmental Ministers Council in Rust |
| 25 - 26 | EU - Mediterranean Conference                    |
| 28 - 30 | Informal Agricultural Council in Krems           |

#### June 2006

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|---------|--------------------------|
| 15 - 16 | European Council Meeting |
|---------|--------------------------|

BROWN